

Linda Clair
Evening Meeting and Weekend Meditation Retreat
8–10 November 2019, Barcelona, Spain
Transcription from Audio Recordings

File 2c – Saturday afternoon discussion

Linda: So any questions?

Question: I'm deeply grateful because you're helping me a lot. Until today I hadn't realised that you are really my spiritual teacher. Although I have been practicing for a while it has never been as constant as it is now, and with the knowledge of myself, my roles, my worth – until today I didn't know that. I have met a lot of other people who have helped me but they didn't hit home. However, you do. At first I really liked your kindness and humility. And because of being a woman I felt you closer. I consider you a very honest and valuable person. For a while now I have really trusted you. You have all my trust and that's a big thing because I'm really sceptical about other teachers. I think it's fair that I say publicly that you give all. And that all your teachings are experienced sooner or later. I want to be fair so I want to thank you for that.

Linda: Thank you.

Question: I forgot something very important! Your teachings are universal, not sectarian, not religious. I remember how that reached me the first time I met you.

Linda: I don't see them as my teachings.

Question: I also want to thank P. because through him, we know you. And he keeps us sitting. When we have any doubts, he helps us. And without P. I would have never met you.

Question: When one listens to lots of interviews with awakened people, they often describe what we see as reality to be illusion, fantasy, a dream – but that it's only possible to appreciate that when one has awoken or died. I wonder if you have any reflections on this? And whether for us to consider this is useful as part of our practice?

Linda: Yes, but I wouldn't get too much into it. The reason you're doing this is because you realise it's not real, to a degree. You realise you're very attached to something that's not real. Could you express it slightly differently?

Question: I often hear people describing this life as being... Well, the analogy that's often used is a cinema screen with a movie playing on it and we consider the film is real when actually the only thing that's real is the screen. It's very difficult to experience that oneself. In a way we have to rely on trust when we hear that analogy.

Linda: I remember hearing things like that described. I don't think it did help me much. I just couldn't understand really what they were talking about. And I don't think I use descriptions like that when I'm speaking, I suppose because I don't feel it is very useful, but that's just me.

Question: Do you deliberately avoid using words like “awareness”?

Linda: I don't avoid it; I do use the word awareness a bit but I tend to not use a lot of spiritual language. For example, I notice that a non-dual teachers seem to have developed a language that's used by most non-dual teachers. Some of the time I don't know what they're talking about, and I don't think they do either. So yes, I'd rather speak in as down-to-earth terms as possible. I do use “awareness” sometimes. But yes, I deliberately don't use certain terms or descriptions.

But really, I'm just teaching from my own experience and that sort of stuff didn't appeal to me. It doesn't mean there's anything wrong with it or that it's not valuable, I just didn't find it useful or attractive myself.

Question: In my case, I'm quite used to that type of language (Advaita.) In 2006 I started meditating again after many years without doing it. But I do remember the experience I had when I was nineteen. But the fact that things change, I know. I wanted to ask you something related to this. I have a granddaughter who is one-year-old and I really enjoy being around her when I., my daughter and granddaughter are at home. I haven't told I. but maybe for a couple of months now, when I was with her I almost had panic attacks – it was a huge anxiety – because I was aware that that kind of enjoyment with a girl of such age will go. I felt like the passing of time will erase all the happiness. What I did, because of your teaching, is to face that emotion and little by little that panic passed. Although I know everything passes and doesn't last, I can enjoy them without fear. So the way I have overcome that is not by thinking about the analogy of the screen but facing that fear in all its ruthlessness, and it went away. That's how I face life now.

Linda: Good. I use analogies sometimes. The screen thing – I never understood that. It never inspired me. Does it help you when you hear it?

Question: What I found it useful in my meditation sometimes but I know you don't teach – so it makes me feel guilty (laughter) – is considering my consciousness as a viewer of everything that I'm experiencing. In that sense, I'm stepping back from everything I perceive. Then everything I perceive is the movie.

Linda: Well, don't feel guilty about that. That's just witnessing isn't it. It's really similar to what we're doing. Never waste your energy feeling guilty about anything.

Question: I was joking about feeling guilty. (laughter) But there is the situation when you've been meditating for a while and you've listened to lots of people and have heard lots of different approaches to the search. Additionally, you may have tried different things and had success in different situations so you're sometimes trying to replicate those.

Linda: True, you can become a bit confused and scattered if you're looking at too many YouTube videos of teachers. I hardly ever, ever look at other teachers anymore now. The desire to look at it has just gone – I'm not even interested in criticising them anymore. (laughing) I don't really care what anyone else is doing. I hear little snippets of things, but so what. And you hear lots of stories about teachers but if you're not there you don't really know what's happening.

One thing that's happened in me, particularly the last few months, is that the last of shred of what I could call competitiveness has gone. And that's changed things in quite a deep way. As C. knows, I

used to be a very competitive person. But yes, I did have a very strong competitive streak which I really used in my practice. But there does come a time when it can get in the way and it needs to go, it really does. The point I realised it had gone was a couple of weeks ago when I was having what you could call a discussion with someone, and he was insisting he was right in something and I knew he wasn't right. I left it for a while but then I couldn't help but tell him he wasn't right. But the thing was, there was no satisfaction in me in being right. It might sound like simple thing but it was really quite significant to me. Then I started to notice in other aspects that had gone. So it's taken a long, long time but it's gone. Maybe that's why I'm not really interested in looking at other teachers or criticising them – not that I did it much before... except someone. (laughing)

Question: It sounds like you're very aware of every little change in you and it doesn't take much of an effort.

Linda: No, there's no effort involved, it just happens. And things go, just as they are going in you and you don't notice it for a while. It's much more difficult to notice the absence of something than the presence. We're so used to focusing on objects rather than the space between the objects. So what happens is that there's more and more space.

Question: What you're talking about, I may have observed it in me but I considered that selfishness in myself.

Linda: What do you mean? What selfishness?

Question: To dedicate a lot of time to what's happening in you.

Linda: It depends how you define selfish. It becomes just the natural state to watch what's going on inside, and it becomes fascinating. Up to the point of realisation it takes a lot of effort, but then the effort dissolves. But you realise you can never just relax into it.

Question: So you mean that kind of observation – self-awareness – doesn't need to be self-centred, it can also be positive?

Linda: It's not self-centred because there's no self. There're just residual tendencies that you see. And I did notice the competitiveness in me was particularly around men. So it was also to do with wanting to prove myself as a female. So it was a very, very deep thing that dissolved.

Question: With what you said, you made a really exact portrait of myself. I don't consider myself competitive but I can see the need of proving myself in front of men. And I feel satisfaction when I prove it. (laughter)

Linda: There's no fun in life anymore. (laughter)

Question: I wasn't going to say anything but if I don't I'm going to have a worse time. This the fifth retreat I'm with you. Always when I come to your retreats I create some expectations before coming. But in this one I didn't have expectation because I didn't want to come. I bought the train tickets but I didn't want to come. In fact I signed up for the retreat three days ago. I didn't want to come for many reasons. I was scared coming to Barcelona because of the news on TV (about demonstrations). The hardest and the strangest thing was that when I arrived yesterday I felt very

cold and empty. I was very scared. I'm usually a warm person, I need to hug and kiss people. I bother Linda (with hugging) every time I come to retreat. 😊 But yesterday when I hugged you I didn't feel anything and I got scared. I had been quite depressed for a few months. My sales have been quite horrible this year. I have a sore foot and cannot walk properly. I can't dance salsa which I love. I'm very moody. The only time I felt something was when M. said earlier that when she looks at you she cries. (emotional) I wouldn't like to become a cold and empty woman. I'm here but I didn't want to come. Yesterday I had toothache and pain in my foot. And today I have a lot of back pain and was about to leave at one point. But I didn't leave because I was scared of being in Barcelona (laughter) and because I knew that my place is being here. What worries me the most is that emptiness and coldness and I would appreciate if you would tell me that that will go away. (laughter)

Linda: It will go away. (laughter)

Question: Thank you. So it's not me?

Linda: No, you'll end up being warmer than you've ever felt. This is just a phase that everyone goes through, so try not to worry.

Question: I wasn't just worried I was extremely worried – mainly fear.

Linda: It's all about fear. Are you really scared of being in Barcelona? (A little bit.) Do you feel okay now? (Yes.) And as I said, tomorrow will be different. The first day, particularly of the longer retreats, half the people want to find an excuse to leave. Then by the end of the retreat, nobody wants to leave.

Question: Tomorrow I'll cry again and I'll hug you again.

Interjection: I'm meeting a few friends to run in Barcelona now. They're going to make bonfires in the streets and fires. (laughter)

Question: (But seriously) there's a huge interest in making us feel fear.

Linda: That's true.

Interjections: But in all aspects; not just in the news.

Linda: Emotional, dramatic, fear.

Question: That's the basis of our big dream.

Linda: Because we're scared to be here, in our bodies.

Question: I can see how my life spins around judging people and labelling people, and I get fed up with that.

Linda: That's why I kept going. I couldn't stand it anymore. I couldn't look at anyone or anything without judging them. It drove me crazy.

Question: That's something that worries me a bit now, observing that I'm constantly judging others.

Linda: Just keep watching that and use that to motivate you because that's what keeps you going doing this. It's not all the amazing experiences that you have. It's that you can't tolerate yourself anymore. It's not that you hate or loath yourself. You just can't stand being this person. And that's why I kept going.